

Boat had, by then, come nearer to our Doonga. Swiftly, the rope end with Mr Bakarya was tied to a hook in that Boat. Then, all the Twelve Teachers in this Boat paddled through the storm with flying speed. As the movements started becoming swift, Mr. Bakarya cautioned me to be careful and remain in sitting posture in the Doonga. Now it is difficult for me to say how much time it took us to reach our destination. But, one thing is certain that the House-Boat plied/towed to the motor launch reached the last point after our arrival. This could be inferred simply by the fact that engine of motor launch silenced after we halted at the destination. Reaching this place, our Boatman with the help of his wife set the anchor for our Doonga that was tied with the help of a rope to a strong smooth-rounded wooden pole drilled under the ground level of the bank of the River. Soon after some time, my uncle, Mr. Tara Chand, returned to the Doonga. Setting the Doonga in a proper way, we experienced a heavy down-pour, as an aftermath of the fierce gale. In the Doonga itself, I came to know through my uncle that the name of the halting place was Ningal. Reader! here nature has presented ~~us a beautiful scene~~ ^{to} a beautiful scene in a graceful way. It appears as if vast span of the water is confined in a huge cascade, namely, the Wular Lake. More than this, what is seen as splendid is that Ningal is a place where waters from the ^{Lake} trickle in a peaceful and smooth way in the form of a soothing river flowing in calm movements. This river is the very River Thelum which enters the Wular Lake near Banayari Nalla. Here both the banks of the River Thelum form themselves into the vast stretches of land covered with green grass and are under the densely grown willow trees, so much so, the sunshine has never shone itself on the surface of the ground. The marshy land below the willows with sultry weather will not allow one to stand on the ground. Sand and sand, vast beds of it were all round, particularly on the banks of the river and the lake. At places, the River Thelum has shallow patches in a good number. Later, there were brisk movements of people on the bank. Every one was busy with his own work. The Chefs/cooks of all the Doongas and the House Boat were all engrossed in

their own work viz. with the preparation of their respective dinners. Though we did not relish our lunch, which got spoiled on that day, yet we tasted a delicious supper in the night. After whiling our time on the day's happenings, particularly fury of ^{the} gale linking to other fierce storms as experienced by Mr. Tara Chand, our Uncle, this gossip turned out to be interesting. Reader! upto now I have told you about our journey upto the last halting point, but I have now to acquaint you with what our chronicles or the other books have to say. First, I take up Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*'

reference to the Wular Lake. It records as "in the embrace of his arms, the four oceans had become the jewelled mirrors for her coquetry!" 590

("Once more after entering Kaśmīr surrounded by ruling princes, the king for a long time enjoyed the glory which he had gained by his conquests. 591

On one occasion, to the king who had acquired glory in all directions a certain person of divine figure spoke in a dream with hands folded hollow. 592

"O king! in your realm I have been residing in comfort with my relatives; I am the lord of the Nāgas called Mahāpadma, I come to you for asylum." 593

"A certain Dravidian spell-monger is endeavouring to draw me away from here in order to sell me for money in the territory of Maru which yearns for water". 594

"If from him you save me I shall show, in your own country, a hill which produces gold ore, to you who will have conferred a great obligation." 595

The king having heard this in a dream, after despatching spies in all directions, had the spell-monger, who had been discovered somewhere, summoned and questioned him about his intention. 596

When he was granted pardon, he related in detail everything as had been stated by the Nāga; by the king who was amazed he was once more questioned. 597

"How is it possible for you to draw out this Nāga, who excels in spiritual power, from the interior of the lake which extends for several Yojanas?" 598

To him he submitted, "O king! inconceivable are the powers of the spell; if you desire to see them come and you will soon see the marvel." 599

Then, followed by the king, he approached the neighbourhood of the lake; by arrows discharged after muttering incantations he bound the directions and dried up the water. 600

The king then beheld a snake about a span in size with a human

590. The four oceans are referred to in order to show that the king was the master of the whole earth encircled by the four seas.

593. The Wular lake was called the Mahāpadma lake after this Nāga who was required to reside in it. See V. 68, 103, and VIII. 3128.

face, which was wriggling in the mud surrounded by several small snakes.

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"O king I am going to catch him who is abbreviated by the spell"—as he said this, he was prevented by the king who said "You must not seize him."

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At the king's command when he had withdrawn the power of the spell that lake again became as it was before and once more extended to the different directions.

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After having given money and leave for departure to the Dravidian, the king thought to himself: "How is it that this Nāga has not even to-day given the hill of the gold mine?"

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No sooner had he been thinking about this than the Nāga in a dream then spoke to him, "On account of which obligation should the gold producing hill be shown to you?"

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"This is my land, this is alien land" such is the urge in the mind of embodied beings due to habitual residence, the association of ideas and the practice of exclusion.

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"I sought refuge with you through fear of insult; Your Highness, however, in spite of being the protector has himself shown it."

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"The lord, who is believed by the dependents to be unperturbable as the ocean, what other humiliation can there be than this that he should in their very presence be insulted by others?"

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"With what sort of self-assurance shall I see the face of those women, who saw me incapable of giving protection when they were being humiliated by others!"

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"We, who have a status similar to that of the first cause, are being mocked and have become a sport for you, who have been deluded, as if we were common folk."

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"Or rather what is surprising about the thoughtless conduct of kings, who are blinded by the intoxication of sovereign power and who act without foresight?"

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"Kings regard it as an amusement to dishonour men of eminence; they, on the contrary, as long as there is life consider it a living death."

612

"To kings honour is a thing which may be disregarded for the sake of achieving success in their selfish ends; to the high-minded, however, it is one of the things to be upheld even by disregarding life."

613

"Those, who are humiliated by a high personage and treated with contempt, who can gauge the true state of their mind?" 614

"In spite of this, like their Highnesses we are not persons the sight of whom is in vain: therefore, the hill where flows the liquid copper ore will be shown to you." 615

After saying this he gave such directions to him during that very dream that, in waking up at dawn he found the hill of the copper mine. 616

He having drawn copper from the hill which was situate in Kramarājya, struck a hundred crores of Dīnnāras less one stamped with his own designation. 617

He laid a wager in order to humble the pride of kings thus, "Who-soever will coin a full one hundred crores will have vanquished me." 618

By his acts which like the Samasyā were incomplete, it seemed as if the king brought the ruling princes to a standstill in the matter of works which could become equal to his own. 619

Then all of a sudden that protector of the land, owing to the reversal of the subjects' good fortune, abandoning the way of his grandfather proceeded on the father's path. 620

"What is the good of the hardships of world conquest and the like? Acquire money from your own country"—thus besought by the functionaries, he imposed fines in his own kingdom. 621

I will now tell you what Nilamata Purana has revealed. I have already said that the river (Jhelum) "enters the Wular Lake and then comes out as an outflow of water of the lake at the south-west corner about two miles above the town of Sopur. About four miles below Sopur, the Vitasta receives the stream Pohor and after flowing about 14 miles further, it reaches the gorge of Baramulla (Vol. I; page 37)". Again it states "Mahapadma is the famous Volur lake in the western portion of Kashmir valley (Vol. I - page 40)".

I now turn to Majid Husain's book "entitled 'SYSTEMATIC GEOGRAPHY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR' stating "The Wular Lake — Most probably, the Wular has its origin from the Sanskrit word Ullohla meaning the lake with high waves. In Kashmiri language Wular means 'cave'. It is said that at the place of the lake there was a city which was destroyed by an earthquake (Page 36)".

"Wular is the largest fresh water lake in India, being about 80 sq. km. in area. It is almost surrounded by lofty mountains which tower over the north and north-east of the valley. The Bohnar, Madhumati, Erin rivers discharge their water into the lake, while from the south the Jhelum seeks a passage through the Wular to Baramulla. The lands around the Wular are never safe when the floods come down and a torrential rain in the surrounding areas with melting snow will spread the lake over several kilometers of the country. (Page 36)".

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I will take you to a amazing episode of my treatise. It is so that during the preceding weeks of our Wular Lake trip, both the ladies in our house had in store for us certain legends connected with the lake. It was revealed by them that the Kashmiri Pandits used to ask the Wular Lake (personified as Wolur Rāzāe - KING - as known to them) for boons while travelling through the lake. When their prayers were responded, it became, naturally, a firm belief with them that the Wolur Rāzāe is so powerful to ^{grant} their boons. But boons were asked to be granted subject to the fulfilment of the self-imposed conditions. I must repeat before you my mother's own version of a certain legend — Her story was — While a marriage party was travelling across the lake, the moving Doonga stopped abruptly. The related Boatman addressed his travellers to recollect if any of them had not fulfilled the condition for ^{the} grant of a 'boon' by the Wolur Rāzāe. Immediately, a woman among the travellers who had asked for a boon of a son being born to her, to be returned

later, stood up. Fully dressed as she was, she kept her newly born son close to her chest and straightaway jumped into the Lake. Instantly, the Doonga was released from its halting point in the Lake and proceeded towards its destination. Naturally, this smacked of a superstition but nevertheless it left me with an indelible belief to respect the Lake as 'SACRED'.

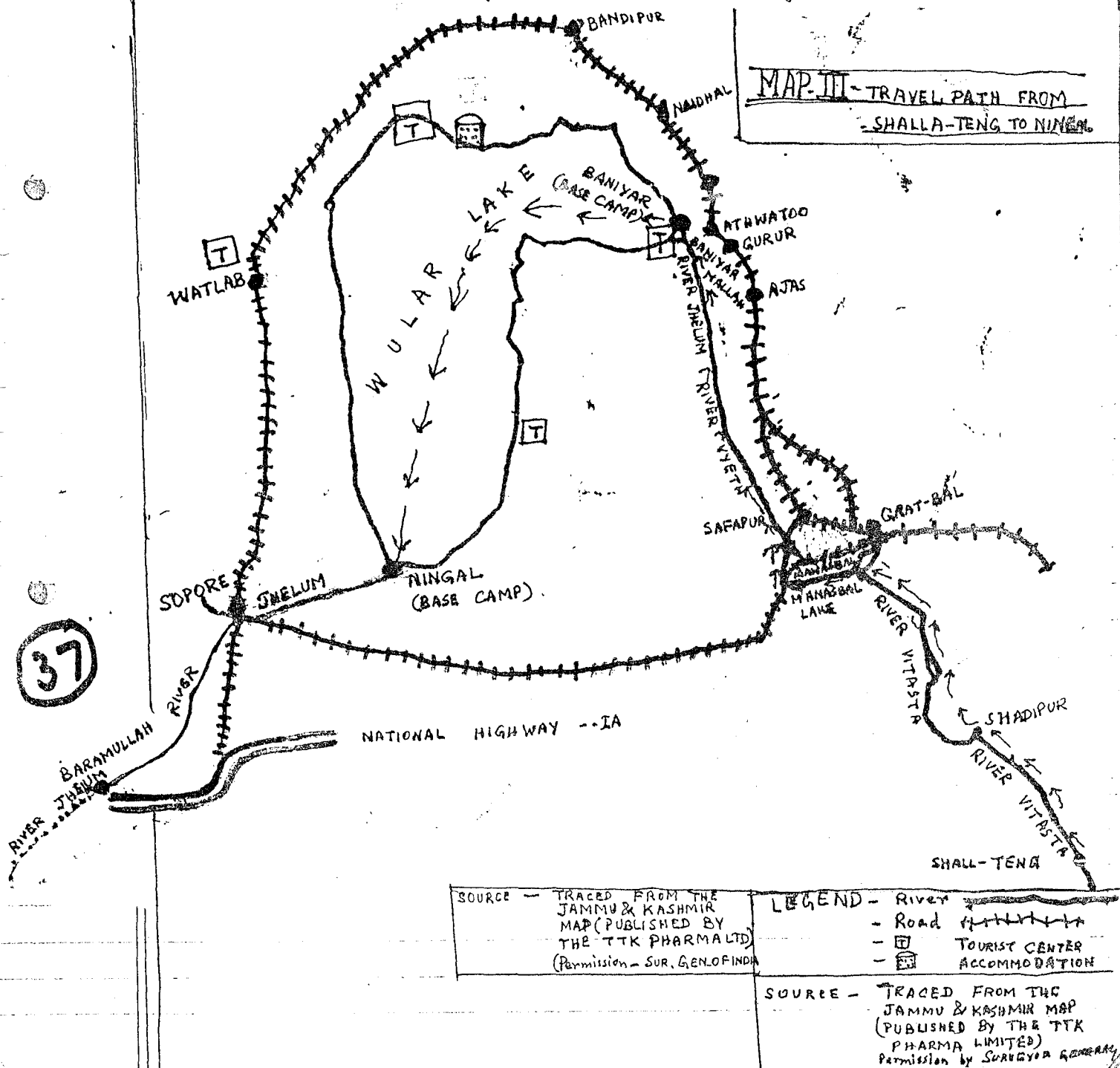
There is another reason for the Wular Lake to come into prominence. Sometime ago, say since past three decades it had begun to be counted as a tourist-interest lake. Watlab near the bank of this Lake has become a renowned tourist spot in this area.

Again the Wular Lake has caught eminence in both the electronic and print media as mention therein is often made about the encounters of security forces or the attacks of militants on the Security forces or civilians and vice versa.

The event being about 67 years old, it is not possible for me now to say precisely for how long we stayed at Niigal. As far as I remember two-three days passed here peacefully. On the next day of our stay here, all the youngsters of our Doonga, lead by self, roamed on the bank of the river playing with sand; sometimes making walls and at other moments making out-lines of rivers or forts. While strolling we also came to the Lake bank. Here also there were sand beds. But at certain places we found eggs of a large size under the sand beds. We too were mischievous, as all of us got busy in taking out the eggs from the sands. We were then and there watched by the noisy cranes (medium size) flying in groups or otherwise. They made a huge crowd on the ground. So sharp was their noise that we had to abandon our adventure and return to our Doonga. During the day, we saw from our Doonga that the Biscoe Couple had joy rides in the motor launch, whereas Mr. F. Jacob had his pleasant outings in the White (Silver) Four-Oared Boat. Similarly, the Teachers in their designated groups also set out for entertainment in the respective boats viz. Twelve / Two Six-Oared Boats. In the evenings, both Mrs. Biscoe and Miss Mallinson shared their joyous trips in the Sailing Boat down the River Vitasta. When Mr. Tara Chand, my uncle, was free, he will share pleasantries with us all in the Doonga. But, unfortunately, the

Teachers and the other Staff-members just drop in in our Doonga for chats with him and thus disturb our entertainment interval.

We are at Ningal - our destination for the last two to three days; but Reader! it is time now that I give you a visual outline on the ground about our journey from Shalla Teng to Ningal viz. the Second and Third Days' travel. So, just glance this MAP-III



During our sojourn at Ningal, the Boatman of our Doonga, obtained the consent of both the ladies of the Doonga for a joy-walk to Sopore along with me. It was a rejoicing moment for me as it meant a free-lance walk for me. What I saw, while walking, were long stretches of land somewhere with greenery and at places with clusters of shrubs. It was about two miles or so long road which took us about half-an-hour to reach Sopore. Here, we moved through the market which had its own grandure in those days. The Boatman (along with me) made a quick return to our halting point - Ningal.

It appeared that it had ordained so, that happy days would come to an end soon. Come the tragic day of April-11, 1934, when the two groups of SEVEN EACH (Twelve Teachers and Two Old Boys - all young) put on their uniforms - Khaki Shorts and Red Woollen Blazers got ready for their trips to the Lake. They left Ningal between 1.30 to 2.00 Pm. and plied their 2 Six-Oared Boats towards the mid-Lake. (Destiny how mysterious you are! It so happened that on April 10, 1934, while the programme for April 11, 1934, was being chalked out, the ^{veteran} Captain of one of the Six-Oared Boats (Mr. Nanak Chand Kaul) ordered one of his Group Teachers - One Mr. Kashi Nath Sadhu, one of our neighbors in Kariapora Khushki Mohalla (Rainawari) who had replaced his father (Mr. Nand Lal Sadhu for reasons of health) to change for Mr. Diva Nath Warikos, incidentally also our neighbour, and the Teacher of the Second Group. How could one know at this juncture that drowning of the latter (Mr. D. N. Warikos) on April 11, 1934, from that Six-Oared Boat will pave the way for safe life of the former (Mr. Kashi Nath Sadhu) who, as it transpired later, had felt deeply humiliated and whose feeling were tremendously hurt by Mr. Nanak Chand Kaul's mysterious order. Though the said two Boats had already left Ningal at about 2.00 Pm, we watched the sky getting darker and darker because fierce clouds had overtaken it. By and by the wind began to blow with jet speed and in no time it appeared that the whole sky was covered with layers and layers of clouds. The torrential rains spread through the whole of Wular Lake and beyond. The Six-Oared Boat steered by the Teacher, other than Mr. Nanak Chand Kaul, returned to Ningal.

at about 5.00 Pm or so on that day. Enquiries made from the Teachers in this Boat revealed that when it saw the Lake being caught in a furious storm, it immediately made U-turn towards the base. While returning it had to face torrential rains resulting in the drowning of all the Teachers. Reader! I have already said that Mr. Kashi Nath Sadhu, Teacher, had changed his Boat and that very Boat change marvellously saved him from drowning as it returned to Ningal safe and sound. All people at the Base Camp (Ningal) became agitated for all the Teachers of the other Six-Oared Boat that did not return. By the time the rain stopped, there was hectic movement of the people there. Perhaps, the group of the Teachers along with the Senior ones met amongst themselves to send a Search Party to look out for the missing ones. Within no time Rev. Biscoe came out from his House-Boat and had a chat with the collected Teachers. He sent a quick word to Mr. Tara Chand, my uncle, who was in the Doonga taking rest. Thus, Mr. Tara Chand immediately started the motor launch and both Rev. Biscoe and my uncle left Ningal at about 6.00 Pm or so for the Lake to search out the missing Boat. But, as the motor launch did not return for more than two hours and as there was ^{also} no trace of the missing Six-Oared Boat, gloom and distress cast its shadows on all. Similarly, in our Doonga all of us also became anxious, as Mr. Tara Chand did not return from the Lake. After some time Mr. Narayan Joo, my cousin and self came out of the Doonga. Both of us were joined by our Boatman. All the three of us from the bank of the River observed that the group of Teachers including their Seniors like Mr. Jacob and Mr. N.L. Bakaya climbed the stairs of the House Boat. One of them had a kerosene lantern and another ^{had} gas burner in their hands. They ordered the Boatmen to keep the House Boat in a horizontal position from that of the diagonal one. Thus, they were on the roof of the House Boat. The Gas Burner was kept at a prominent place on the floor of the roof ^{of the House Boat}. Mr. N. L. Bakaya had the megaphone in his hand, while another Teacher took hold of a Jangle. While Mr. Bakaya ^{through megaphone} shouted out in loudest possible notes